

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RABAT 01410 01 OF 02 082215Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----022879 082220Z /64

O R 082005Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4755  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 1410

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: MASS MO  
SUBJECT: MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST

REF: (A) STATE 057412, (B) STATE 057525 (NOTAL)

1. AS HAS BEEN CUSTOMARY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA, HE RECEIVED IMMEDIATELY ON MARCH 7. DURING 40-MINUTE MEETING I CARRIED OUT INSTRUCTIONS REFTELS, MAKING ORAL POINTS PARA 5 REFTEL (A) (EXCEPT FOR FIRST PART OF FINAL POINT) AND DELIVERING ENGLISH TEXT, PLUS EMBASSY'S UNOFFICIAL FRENCH TRANSLATION, OF SECRETARY'S LETTER. BOUCETTA'S REACTION WAS PREDICTABLY ONE OF DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT AND TOTAL DISMAY. HE UNDERTOOK TO INFORM THE KING WITHOUT DELAY.

2. BEFORE MY PRESENTATION, BOUCETTA LED OFF THE CONVERSATION WITH CRITICISM OF DEP ASST SECY VELIOTES' MARCH 1 TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HIRC (STATE 52784). WHILE AGREEING WITH POSITIVE  
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ASSESSMENT OF US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, HE SAID HE FOUND COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOROCCO "UNACCEPTABLE" AND TOOK PARTICULAR UMBRAGE, AS HE HAD IN THE PAST, WITH OUR FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE MANY GOM STEPS RE SELF-DETERMINATION TAKEN DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS BY CONTINUING TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL AND SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SAHARA. AFTER REVIEWING THE VELIOTES' STATEMENT AND THE CONTENTS OF

THE UNGA SAHARA RESOLUTION FOR WHICH WE VOTED IN DECEMBER 1975, I EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE MARCH 1 HIRC HEARING WAS TO PRESENT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH'S JUSTIFICATION FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE DURING NEXT FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1. I RECALLED THAT GOM NATIONAL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY BEEN INFORMED OF OUR NEW REQUEST TO CONGRESS FOR \$45 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS FOR MOROCCO, THE SAME AMOUNT AS FOR THE PRECEDING YEAR.

3. IN THE GOM'S VIEW, BOUCETTA CONTINUED, THE NEGATIVE REACTION FACING THE SEPTEMBER 1977 MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST DID NOT LIE IN CONGRESS, BUT RATHER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. I RESPONDED THAT I HAD UNDERSTOOD THIS WAS THE VIEW OF MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN, BUT THAT IN MY VIEW, THIS WAS NOT CORRECT. I THEN REVIEWED (A) BOUCETTA'S CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY LAST NOVEMBER THAT THE ARMS REQUEST POSED PROBLEMS FOR US, (B) THE SUBSEQUENT DECISION TO CONSULT INFORMALLY WITH THE CONGRESS AND (C) FINALLY THE CHANGE IN JURISDICTION IN JANUARY OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ARMS REQUEST FROM THE MIDDLE EAST SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE AFRICAN SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEES OF BOTH HOUSES, WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LATTER BEING CRITICAL OF THE REQUEST. BOUCETTA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS PROBABLY MORE COMPLICATED THAN HE REALIZED. MY GUESS IS THAT UNTIL BENGELLOUN FACES THE REALITIES OF THE ROLE AND ATTITUDES OF CONGRESS AND FAITHFULLY REPORTS SAME TO HIS GOVERNMENT, BOUCETTA WILL REMAIN SKEPTICAL OF THE INABILITY  
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OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO CARRY OUT A POLICY WHICH HE BELIEVES IS CLEARLY IN THE U.S. AS WELL AS THE GOM INTERESTS.

4. I NEXT RECALLED THAT IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH ROYAL COUNSELOR GUEDIRA ON FEBRUARY 25 BEFORE LEAVING FOR COM MEETING IN TUNIS, HE HAD ASKED ME ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST. BOUCETTA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE CONVERSATION WHEN I HAD TOLD GUEDIRA I HAD NO PRECISE INFORMATION BUT SENSED THERE WERE PROBLEMS IN THE CONGRESS. NOW I HAD A PRIVATE LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE FONMINISTER ON THE SUBJECT.

5. BOUCETTA THEN READ THE SECRETARY'S LETTER ALOUD IN FRENCH, COMMENTING THAT THE U.S. DECISION WAS "REALLY REGRETTABLE". REGARDING THE PHRASES "AT THE PRESENT TIME" AND "OUR PRESENT INABILITY", BOUCETTA SAID WITH SOME FEELING THAT THE PROBLEM WAS URGENT AS MOROCCO NEEDED THE ARMS NOW TO FACE UP TO THE INCREASINGLY SERIOUS THREAT FROM OUTSIDE.

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EXDIS

6. I WENT ON TO COVER IN FULL OBLIGATORY FIRST TALKING POINT  
PARA 5 REFTEL (A), STRESSING THAT, APART FROM MOROCCO'S  
SEPTEMBER ARMS REQUEST PER SE, UNDER THE TERMS OF OUR 1960  
AGREEMENT THE ARMS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. WERE FOR USE SOLELY  
IN MOROCCO, NOT IN THE SAHARA OR MAURITANIA. BOUCETTA SAID HE  
FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT, AND ONCE AGAIN  
NOTED THAT OUR DEFINITION AND THAT OF HIS GOVERNMENT DIFFERED  
AS TO THE CONFINES OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO. BOUCETTA SAID  
HE LOOKED FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THIS QUESTION FURTHER WITH THE  
SECRETARY ON MARCH 11. I ENDED THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION  
BY MENTIONING THAT THE PURPOSE OF OUR CONGRESSIONAL  
CONSULTATION HAD BEEN TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF AMENDING  
THE 1960 AGREEMENT TO PERMIT USE OF US-FURNISHED ARMS FOR THE  
DEFENSE OF THE SAHARA AND MAURITANIA, AND THAT CONGRESSIONAL  
OPPOSITION HAD BEEN FOCUSSED SPECIFICALLY ON THIS POINT  
BECAUSE OF THE QUESTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

7. BOUCETTA UNDERTOOK TO PASS SECRETARY'S LETTER WITHOUT  
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DELAY TO THE KING, ALONG WITH A REPORT OF OUR CONVERSATION.  
KING WOULD BE HIGHLY DISAPPOINTED, AND WOULD PROBABLY FIND  
IT DIFFICULT IN VIEW OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH VISITING U.S.  
OFFICIALS IN RECENT MONTHS TO UNDERSTAND HOW USG COULD ARRIVE

AT THIS CONCLUSION, BOUCETTA ADDED.

8. REGARDING LAST PARA OF REFTEL B, BOUCETTA GAVE NO INDICATION OF SUBSTANCE OF KING'S MESSAGE HE WILL BE CARRYING TO PRESIDENT DESPITE OCCASION DURING CONVERSATION WHEN HE COULD HAVE DONE SO.

9. IN BRIEF REFERENCE TO OAU SAHARA MEDIATION EFFORTS, I MENTIONED THAT WASHINGTON HAD SENT CIRCULAR CABLE TO A NUMBER OF OUR EMBASSIES IN AFRICA SUPPORTING THE HOLDING OF SPECIAL SAHARA SUMMIT IN LIBREVILLE, NOW AGAIN POSTPONED. BOUCETTA REPLIED THAT THIS SUMMIT WOULD IN ANY CASE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING. THE MOROCCAN POSITION WAS CLEAR: THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ABANDONING THE SAHARA. I NOTED THE DESIRABILITY OF FURTHER EFFORTS TO TRY TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN THE SAHARA AND TO MEET CONCERNS ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION. WHILE A REFERENDUM NOW APPEARED IMPRACTICAL, I WONDERED, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, WHETHER ONE MIGHT CONSIDER A VISIT OF A PRESTIGIOUS, NEUTRAL GROUP TO SOUND OUT OPINION IN THE SAHARA AFTER TWO YEARS OF MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN ADMINISTRATION, FOLLOWED BY A REPORT TO UN. SUCH EFFORTS MIGHT HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE CONGRESS. BOUCETTA NOTED THE IDEA WITH INTEREST, BUT NATURALLY MADE NO COMMITMENT.

10. AS BOUCETTA HAD OTHERS WAITING TO SEE HIM, WE COULD NOT REVIEW DRAFT PRESS GUIDANCE PARA 6 REFTEL (A). ACTION REQUESTED. WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING IN ADVANCE WHEN CONGRESS (AND SPECIFICALLY WHO IN CONGRESS) TO BE  
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INFORMED BY DEPARTMENT. ALSO REQUEST EMBASSY BE PROVIDED ANY SUBSEQUENT DEFINITIVE PRESS GUIDANCE. BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT GOM BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE ON BOTH COUNTS. ANDERSON

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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 08 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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